

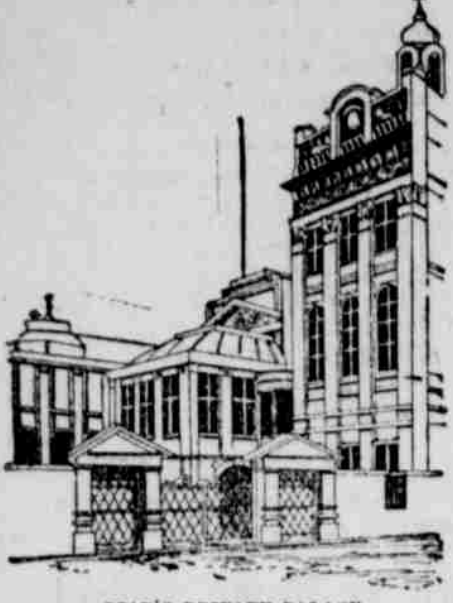
AMONG THE RUSSIANS.

THE DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

The Czar a Badly Abused Man—A Devoted and Dutiful Husband and a Hard-Working Official—The Czarina and Other Members of the Royal House.

BY WILLIAM KILGORE CURTIS.

I was enabled in Petersburg to obtain two very charming glimpses of the domestic life of the imperial family—one through the spectacles of a gentleman who had long been attached to the household, and was not only a trusted official of the Czar, but a friend and frequent companion of the Czar, who walked and rode with him, played



CZAR'S PRIVATE PALACE.

billiards with him, had assisted him in his correspondence, and had frequently been the escort of the Empress as well as her husband in their travels. The other was from a verbal sketch in great detail by a Danish lady who had also been attached to the household for several years, and was brought from her old home in Denmark by the Czarina soon after her marriage with the Czar. What they told me was indorsed by Minister Lotrop in a great part, both from personal knowledge and the information he had acquired.

Instead of being a brutal libertine, cruel to his attendants and neglectful of his wife and children, as he is represented by the English papers and the publications of the nihilists, the Czar is the most domestic and devoted of husbands, the most generous and considerate of masters, and is the only ruler Russia ever had who has not kept a mistress. Every one of whom I inquired, from the United States Minister to the attendant at the hotel, agreed that the personal habits of the Czar and his marital relations were above reproach. He is not and never has been guilty of the excesses which stained the life of his otherwise estimable father, and even before his marriage there was never a reflection upon his conduct. I was told again that he was about the only man in Russia who had no record as a rascal.

Of his brothers, the Grand Dukes Vladimir, Alexis, and Sergius, the less said the better. Alexis can be seen in the streets of Petersburg almost any day in an open carriage with a woman whose relations to him are the talk of the drowsy drivers. The prince in which she lives belongs to the Government, and her expenses are paid from the allowance he receives from the public treasury. His brother Sergius has been almost as bad, but the wife of Sergius is a woman of more positive disposition than the wife of Alexis, and whatever he does now lays "in the sky." These things are, however, not regarded in Russia as they are with us, for the morals of the people are more "Frenchy" than those of the populace of Paris itself.

The Imperial Family.

The Czar was married in 1877 to the Princess Dagmar of Denmark, then in her twentieth year. They have four children living and have buried one. The eldest, the crown prince, is Nicholas, aged 17; the second is the Grand Duchess Georgia, aged 12; the third is the Grand Duchess Xenia, aged 9; and the youngest is the Grand Duke Michael, aged 6. I have a photograph of the family, taken shortly before the last child was born. The Czarina is three years younger than her sister, the Princess of Wales. The Crown Prince Nicholas is Colonel of a regiment of the Horse Guards, which is always commanded by the Crown Prince. From the minute he is born till the crown of Russia is placed upon his head, then he is supposed to take command not only of the entire armies and the navy, and become the head of the church as well as the state, but is Captain of a company of bombardiers and Colonel of the Regiment of the Transfiguration, whose duty is to guard the Winter Palace—the finest body of troops in the service.

The young Prince rides at the head of his troops from the time he can sit on a saddle, even when his horse has to be led, has his aids and his staff, and is supposed to issue orders like a real colonel of cavalry. He is old enough now to take an active part in the military maneuvers, and spent a good part of last summer in camp with his troops at Tsarskoe-Selo. He has been educated by English and Russian tutors, and is said to be a warm-hearted, affectionate boy, a great favorite with every one, and quite democratic in his notions. At the same time he has his father's imperious will, and does not like to have his plans interfered with. The boy and his father are very fond of each other, but sometimes their intentions conflict, when a struggle comes and one of them has to give way. It is said that the Czar commonly yields first, and the boy always has an ally in his mother.

The Princess Georgia is an ordinary-looking child—in fact, none of the children are handsome—but she is said to be unusually bright, and her witticisms are quoted in the courts of Russia, Denmark and England. She has considerable artistic talent, too—sketches and paints well, and her father's library is full of her work. The little palace at Tsarskoe-Selo I saw a pen-and-ink sketch from her hand that would attract favorable comment in any collection. She is her father's favorite of all the children.



PRINCE IMPERIAL.

all the children, it is said, while Nicholas is his mother's, and is his companion in his walks and drives. He has often said that her bright comments on men and things afford him more entertainment than he gets from any other source.

The children have English, French and Russian governesses. They speak, read, and write all three languages, and the two eldest can talk Danish, their mother's native tongue. From the descriptions I have had, the family circle must be a charming one, and not unlike that of the ordinary sort of people who are not hedged round with dignity like a king. Both the Czar and the Czarina are fond of sport, ride, walk, shoot, play tennis and billiards with their children, and spend as much time with them as the ordinary father and mother, and, under the

circumstances, perhaps a little more; for the Czarina cannot go shopping and visiting like the mothers of the little girls in the United States, and has no household cares to occupy her time. The Danish lady of whom I have spoken says that nearly every night in winter, when the Czarina has no state engagements, she goes to the nursery and reads Danish fairy stories to her children from the very same books she had when she was a child.

The Czarina as a Seamstress. She makes much of her clothing also, although she has a household full of seamstresses, and often takes her new hats to pieces, and trims them over according to her own taste. The Empress has a knack with the needle, and makes beautiful embroidery. The Metropolitan of the Russian Church, the great high priest, on ceremonial occasions of great importance, wears, among his other vestments, a cane, or something of that sort, embroidered by her hands. She joined the Greek Church before she could wear the crown, but there was a prejudice against her when she was crowned Princess because of her Protestantism, to which she clung. After the assassination of the late Czar she placed herself under the instruction of one of the priests at the palace, and finally decided to accept the religion of Russia, so that she could be crowned.

The Empress is bright and witty, and it is from her instead of the Czar that little Georgia gets her keen wits and tongue; but she has led a very sad life, surrounded by dangers, being constantly reminded of the peril in which she lives by the presence of detectives and guards, and says she is never perfectly happy except when she returns to her old home in Denmark, where no nihilists come. The entire family is in the habit of visiting Copenhagen every year, and remaining for six weeks or two months for this reason. It is a convenient journey by sea and takes only a couple of days.

The Czar is devoted to his wife, and they are seldom separated, even for a day. When he goes to Petersburg from the summer palace she is always with him; when he goes out to review his troops she is ever at his side; they ride together in the parks surrounding the palace; sit together upon the deck of the imperial yacht as he cruises around the Gulf of Finland, and she seems to fear to leave him for any purpose. There is a cloud hanging over her life, and it is apprehension for her husband's safety.

One day the little 5-year-old prince, boasting about his own bravery, looked up to the Czar and remarked: "If any man should shoot you, papa, I would kill him." The Czar laughed and patted the little boaster upon the head, but the Empress, never willing to jest or even smile, said: "And I should kill myself."

We visited the palace at Tsarskoe-Selo, in which the Czar and Czarina spent their

large, splendidly built man, and moves like an athlete. There is strength in every motion of his hand and every glance of his eye. There is no face among all the great men of Europe with more character in its lines than his, and the chief characteristic is determination. He is a man of most intense convictions. He hates and he loves very strongly; never forgets an injury or a kindness, but has a sympathetic disposition, and is inclined to look upon crime as a disease.

This point was alluded to recently in conversation with an official of the Government who has to do with philanthropic institutions. He told me that the Czar had always shown the greatest interest in the humane treatment of the insane, and had several times expressed a opinion that most criminals were partially or wholly out of their minds. He is much more lenient toward the nihilists than his police, and it was through him that the entire family of the most criminals were partially or wholly out of their minds. He considers the young men, the students who engage in conspiracies against his father, as being misled, and is inclined to treat them generously; but an officer of the army who is guilty of conspiracy or treason he will never forgive. In the Czar's mind hanging is too good for him.

The religious element in the character of the Emperor is exceedingly strong. He has always had a serious temperament, even when a boy, and has taken a greater interest in religious matters than his father did, or in fact any of his predecessors. He is scrupulously exact in the performance of all his religious duties, attends mass every morning, and has taken a greater interest in religious matters than his father did, or in fact any of his predecessors. He is scrupulously exact in the performance of all his religious duties, attends mass every morning, and has taken a greater interest in religious matters than his father did, or in fact any of his predecessors. He is scrupulously exact in the performance of all his religious duties, attends mass every morning, and has taken a greater interest in religious matters than his father did, or in fact any of his predecessors.

The Czar's Billiard-Room.

Adjoining the library is the Czar's billiard-room, in which is a large carved oak chest filled with choice wines, liquors, and cigars. In another room is a roulette table, for the Czar gambles like all other Russians. They do not regard the habit with any more aversion than smoking or whist. All ladies as well as gentlemen gamble and smoke. The billiard-room connects with a pair of handsomely furnished drawing-rooms, which are arranged with great taste, and by the Empress herself, who designed most of the furniture. One is at once struck by the absence of the gold leaf that is so prevalent in other palaces.

Beyond the drawing-rooms are the apartments of the Empress, a series of half a dozen rooms, furnished in cretonte of different tints and figures, the walls being of the same. Her sitting-room is sunny and cozy, and adjoins the sewing-room. Then comes her boudoir and bedroom, with a bath and little chapel adjoining. This chapel, not larger than a "hall bedroom," contains a dozen or more icons of the different saints, several photographs of the Czar and the children, a water-color of the



THE EMPRESS IN HER ROBES OF STATE.

lives until after he was crowned, after the assassination of his father. It is the smaller but the most homelike of all the imperial palaces, and the Empress likes it better than any other. The family goes there frequently for a few days, but it is too small to accommodate the retinue that always attends them, and they have to sacrifice to the pleasure to the convenience of others.

It was a sad day for the Princess Dagmar when Alexander II. was assassinated. She not only had to give up her religion, her home comforts and quiet, the pleasure she took in the retired life she was living with her husband and children, but her peace of mind as well; for the life of the Crown Prince is never attacked, and as long as some other man was on the throne her husband was safe. It was at Tsarskoe-Selo that she spent those happy days, and a visit there was always a pleasure to her.

The palace is not much larger than the White House at Washington, but it is only one story in height and surrounds a court after the manner of all continental houses. The main hall is filled with the trophies of the Czar's skill as a sportsman, and is full of wild boars, the antlers of elk and deer, the skins of bears and tigers, and mementoes of many a hunt. On the right are his office rooms—the hall with the portraits of the Czar and the Empress, and the study, which are a number of American inventions. Here, too, is a curious combination clock, showing the time at every one of the principal cities on the globe by a series of little dials.

In the library are a large collection of books and magazines, most of them on technical subjects, the English, French, German, and Russian languages being represented. I saw Longfellow's and Whitier's poems, several of Howells' novels, which looked familiar, and the Edinburgh prints of Frank Stockton's "Lady and the Tiger." This, I was told, was the favorite story of the Czar, and Minister Lotrop afterwards told me that "The Casting Away of Mrs. Ayleshire" and "Mrs. Locks" had been read with absorbing interest not only by the family of the Czar but by all the court, and the remarkable adventures of those ladies was the theme of much conversation at dinner parties and other gatherings in Russia.

The Emperor's Character. Looking at his photograph does not give one more than a suggestion of the amount of character in the Czar's face. He is a

Princess of Wales, and another of the Duchess of Edinburgh of England, the sister of the Czar. Over the dressing-table of the Empress are photographs of her father and mother, the King and Queen of Denmark, the Czar, her children, and scattered around in little frames on the tables and cabinets are pictures of other friends. There are several sketches by the Princess Dagmar of England and several by the daughters of the Princess of Wales.

The Czarina's writing portfolio lay on a desk, tempting us to open it, with a number of new books, some evidently half-read. On the piano was a lot of music, some with autographs of the composers or the friend by whom it was presented. The bedrooms of the children are separated from those of their father and mother by a little passage, and connect with the school-room, a plain, uncarpeted apartment, with ordinary desks and chairs, and on the walls hung several sketches made by the little Princess Georgia.



COSSACK GIRL.

There are several other places in the neighborhood belonging to different members of the royal family, and nobles, who have made Tsarskoe-Selo a village of palaces and a favorite resort for summer.

The Czar is not approachable, for obvious reasons. He is the most difficult man in the world to see for any purpose, because he is so completely surrounded by police and soldiers; but when access is once gained to his presence he is representative of one of the most agreeable of companions—"not a good talker," as one expressed it, "but a splendid listener." He seems to be interested in anything you are of a mind to discuss, and often suggests topics to his callers in a pleasant, off-hand way to draw them out. He says little himself, but remembers all he hears and from whom he heard it. I would rather tell a good story

to the Czar than any man I know, but I never heard him tell one. He is particularly interested on all scientific and political topics. He will listen as intently to a discussion of the political situation in America as that in Europe, and the description of any new discovery will delight him. He will inquire minutely for the details, and will then ask where he can find further information. Small talk and gossip never interests him. He will change the subject at once and abruptly as soon as it is begun. He cares nothing for newspapers and seldom reads them, but has a secretary who reads every journal of Europe of any importance, and is able to tell the Czar what he wants to know of current events.

The Emperor at Work.

He does much more work than any of his ministers, and is at his desk many hours each day. Like the Emperor Nicholas, he rises early in the morning and has done a



PRINCESS GEORGIA.

good day's work before the rest of the household are out of bed. He takes a personal interest in all the affairs of the army and tests all new arms and equipments himself.

Not long ago Maxim, the gun-maker, went to Petersburg with a new invention, and, after an interview with the Minister of War, obtained an invitation to visit the Czar. He did not take his models with him, as the War Minister requested him not to, saying that the Czar was very much pressed for time, had no end of important papers before him, and if he got hold of a new gun he would do nothing else until he had satisfied himself of its merits or demerits. Mr. Maxim reluctantly left his models at his hotel and took only photographs with him.

"Where is your gun?" asked the Czar as soon as the introduction was over. Mr. Maxim explained that he had not brought it owing to the time he had received from the War Minister that the Czar would not have time to examine it. The Czar expressed his disappointment, but Mr. Maxim showed him his box of photographs and began to explain the merits of his invention. He says he has seen all the great soldiers of this generation and discussed guns with them, but he never found so active or intelligent a listener as the Czar. The interview lasted two hours, and was renewed the next day at the request of the Emperor, who made another appointment with the understanding that Mr. Maxim should bring his gun with him. Mr. Maxim says that no one can look in the Czar's face without being convinced of the absurdity of the stories that are related about his drunkenness and brutality in the English papers. He was offered brandy at the close of the interview, but the Emperor took none himself.

Why Kill Snakes?

The utter horror produced in almost every one at the sight of a snake I conceive to be the result of education. From my earliest recollection, when going into a bush pasture for the cows or for berries, my good mother would caution me to "look out for snakes," or "don't let the snakes catch you," and during those early years I heard awful stories about snakes, which created a fear of them from which I have suffered much, and I suppose that has been the experience of the average New England boy. Now, I earnestly protest against that kind of education, as it proves an element of great discomfort to children in after life. Snakes are perfectly harmless (excepting the venomous species) and as timid as birds, and children should be taught so, and they should no more be allowed to be cruel to a snake than to a frog or a turtle. When young I heard the maxim, "If you kill the first snake you see, it is a sign you conquer your enemies." And also, "Break the first snake and kill the first snake, and it will insure good luck for the year." Unnecessary cruelty to anything that has life should be censured.

It is now to me a pitiful sight to see a man turn aside to pursue a little innocent snake, as harmless as a fly and not half so annoying, as though some dire calamity was to be averted by his success in destroying it. Although I must confess to having done the same thing and practiced much cruelty toward them, it was simply the result of education; and now, since I have thoroughly made their acquaintance, I feel disposed in some small measure to atone for my past indiscretions. I was taught to regard toads with disgust, no less than the snake, but not with the same dread. I was told that to handle them would cause my hands to be covered with warts, etc. I have since known people who were fond of playing with them, and I now call to mind a lady of culture and refinement who would catch a toad and pet it, tell it what pretty eyes it had, call it one of God's beautiful, beautiful creatures, and lay it against her face as a child would a pet bird. Toads and snakes are equally harmless, but neither of them have any attraction for me; still I can be merciful toward them.—Forest and Stream.

A Diabolical Stringed Instrument.

The Chinese "urh-heen" is one of the principal musical instruments of that backward nation in everything as regards music. Their instruments are the same, many of them, as those of centuries ago, and with their prejudices against revolutions in their forefathers' customs they retain some of the most diabolical stringed instruments. The "urh-heen" has four strings fastened to pegs coming from the top of a small tube, extending from one end of a long wooden box with a bridge in the center. The sounds emitted are crude and nowise pleasing, except it may be to the Chinese, where every known instrument is collected and made to howl forth its dismal or screeching strain, there comes no relief to the sensitive ear but an ultimate departure.—Globe Democrat.

THERE are 493 mountain peaks in the United States more than 10,000 feet in height. The highest mountain east of the Mississippi is Mount Balsam Cone, in the Black Mountains of North Carolina, which is 6,611 feet high.

BARBERS lived in Greece in the fifth century, and at Rome in the third century B. C.

FOR THE LADIES.

HOW DAME FASHION WOULD HAVE YOU ATTIRED.

Matters of Especial Interest to Ladies Who Desire Becoming and Fashionable Toilets—The Art of Dressing Economically and Well.

[NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE.]

In New York, the fashionable woman is just betwixt cool and cold weather. She is loath to put on the wraps of winter, because, however beautiful they may be, they are necessarily less stylish and asymmetrical in shape than tight bodices. Therefore, she arrays herself for the promenade in a toilet decorated by devices calculated to look like a warmth which they do not produce. The illustration explains this idea at a glance. The figure of this young woman is good enough to excuse a little vanity, and to advantageously display a representative December costume. The hat has fur and feathers on it, and the same spoils of robbery from beasts and birds cover the front of the gown from collar to hem. The art of adornment in dress is applying itself to decorative uses of fur and feathers combined, and all the effects of embroidery are produced with those materials, as in this instance. The design of the dress itself is in the fashion of Louis XVI., pure and simple, the redingote being of dark-gray velvet, while the embroideries and garnitures of fur and feathers are intermixed with silk and steel. The small turban hat of gray velvet is almost hidden under the mass of gray fur and ostrich feathers. The tiny muff is a mixture of the same color in fur and feathers, with a bit of blue velvet to match the same touch of color in the bonnet.

There is one freak of fashion not shown in that picture, and deserving of suppression in every way, although it has come into considerable vogue. That is the revival of thick and ample veils. These are not only made to cover the face, but they are swathed across the back of the head and around the neck in an inartistic manner. Besides, they suggest that the wearer has a face which will not stand bright daylight exposure. A bit of accedeote is appropriate. Ada Rehan, the favorite actress of the Daly Company, is forty years old and over. She makes up fairly for girlish roles on the stage, and her famous "prattle of maturity" enables her to act the frivolous girl admirably. But at close sight, in the cold light of day, she shows her age. A friend met her in Broadway, and her



A NOVEMBER EXHIBIT.

face was wrapped with a veil, in the new style.

"Well, Ada," said the possibly jealous actress, "what makes you hide yourself behind a veil in that manner?" "Oh, that is after the manner of She, the miraculous heroine of Rider Haggard's story."

"And do you impersonate She before her second exposure to the pillar of fire," was the placid but vicious question, "or afterward?"

Something like that question is always raised by a thick veil. Is the concealed face young and beautiful, like that of the wondrously preserved She, or too old for sightliness, like that creature's countenance after the wrinkles of a thousand years had suddenly appeared?

Current feminine interest is now concentrated in-dooors, very largely, because the season of social assemblages has begun. Costumes for balls and receptions range all the way from the simplicity of a debutante's gown, as shown in the picture above, to the furthest venture into daring picturesqueness, as portrayed in the next sketch below. There is no limit to the whims in which some women will indulge themselves. For instance, at one of the week's drawing-room events, a certain married belle appeared with circlets of leaves and vines laid on her bare arms with gold leaf. The design had been wrought out for her by some artistic hand, and then somehow made adhesive to her skin. But such eccentricities are only to be mentioned as news—not recommended for imitation. Even the loose-vested gown in the cut might properly be considered a trifle too pronounced in style. It was worn at a very swell reception. The material was soft, pliant, India silk, which gave a statuesque effect of drapery. Across the breast, around the waist, encircling the hips, and finally tied loosely at the left side, with the ends hanging down, was a heavily beaded rope of satin.

It is declared that Mrs. Harrison will oppose décollete dresses at the White House when she gets there; but whether her influence shall then be felt or not, it is certain that there is no reform to be expected this season. The corsages of ball and dinner dresses range as low as ever, and the pictures in this article are drawn so as to show the newest outlines for waists of gowns. The shape is much the same as last winter in front, and there is a repetition of sleevelessness; but an alteration is often made at the back, where the opening runs down to a very low point. This is illustrated in the cases of the two young ladies portrayed with

their backs turned to the observer. One of these plates, moreover, belongs to an actual dialogue. A dude appeared at a ball with his hair singularly cropped. The French fashion of short hair standing stiffly upright all over the top of the head has been in vogue for several years with men qualified by the possession of hair in quantity enough for the purpose. But this chap had varied the fashion by a cut which left the hair standing rather higher at the sides, as in the sketch.

"How do you like it?" he asked of a girl acquaintance.

"It is very odd, at least," she replied.

"I am told that it makes me look like Mephistopheles—that is, real devilish."

"Indeed! It hadn't struck me that way. I fancied that it suggested quite another being with abnormal ears."

As to what may be called the attributes of evening toilets, some of the bonbonnières are very pretty. They are in the shape of a large silk handkerchief tied cornerwise and having sprays of green and purple grapes and



ARTLESS AND ARTFUL.

leaves showing at each corner. The handkerchiefs are in the brightest mixture of color, and in rich silk. Others are in the form of a gigantic green nut, with the nut made in satin, the calyx in velvet. The newest handkerchiefs have broad borders composed of several lines of silk thread in bright colors, and the edges finished in tiny scallops, buttonhole in the same colors. They are of the finest batiste, and the colors are principally red, blue, yellow, and mauve. It is a custom now to carry several handkerchiefs at once, disposed in different pockets or other receptive places in the toilet, and these are taken out, for use or display, according to handiness or the whim of the belle. The fashionable tendency of floral decoration is toward more simplicity and more artistic arrangement. Refined people are beginning to recognize that flowers should not be tortured into impossible and ridiculous shapes, and that the more natural the effect produced, the more beautiful. Much importance is now attached to the auxiliaries of the toilet, and in view of the fact that they supply the effect of the same they cannot be held insignificant. Of the ornaments worn in the house, the old-fashioned buckle with sharp teeth for holding the belt and ribbon is again in vogue, and comes into play upon many stylish gowns. Stones in real jewels are mounted in showy designs, as, for instance, blue topaz in an elegant buckle of crescent shape, and Arizona garnets in one of star shape. A ruby, a catseye, a diamond and a sapphire ornament, a buckle shaped like an agate, the stone being cut in Cabochon style, without facets. A new fan is to have odd coins from foreign countries mounted up as pins to hold draperies or girdles. The Peruvian collar affords a pleasing specimen, being particularly handsome in design. There are no great changes in jewelry this season. Flower pins, in small shape, continue to be worn. The newest pins more closely approach the open brooch-shape worn by our grandmothers than anything recently made. Single pansies, single daisies, small passion-flowers and sweet peas are all popular, but the newest pins are little open circles and plaques of white or blue enamel, set with diamonds, turquoises,



MEPHISTOPHELES AND MARGUERITE.

or the beautiful Arizona garnets which show fire at night, all red as rubies, and have no touch of the purplish hue of old-time garnets.—Chicago Ledger.

Concoits in Silver and Gold. A CORBACATED column of silver makes a unique cologne bottle.

A PRETTY combination box for holding stamps and matches is of gold.

A PRETTY jewel box is in the form of a double heart, Queen Anne style.

A NEW piece of pocket jewelry is a silver rule with gold hinges and ends.

An odd shoe horn is of stained ivory with a silver handle twisted rope fashion.

ROMAN etruscan gold sleeve buttons with opalized borders are new and tasty.

SILVER chataine mirrors after the style of Louis XIV. are tasteful and fashionable.

MONSTER toilette bottles with silver tops ornamented with etchings have become the fashion.

The latest addition to desk furnishing is a silver inkstand, plaque-shaped, with wide border chasing.

BONNETS made of cloth or any other wool fabric matching the costume are still in favor with stylish women.